

Reading by Willis E. Bishop at Bible Study May 7, 1996
[Source unknown]

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I dreamed that I was in the celestial city, though when and how I got there I could not tell. I was one of a great multitude which no man could number from all countries and peoples and times and ages.

Somehow I found that the saint who stood next to me had been in Heaven more than eighteen hundred years. "Who are you?" I asked. We both spoke the language of heavenly Canaan, so I understood him and he me. "I was a Roman Christian," said he, "and I lived in the days of the Apostle Paul. I was one of those who died in Nero's persecutions. I was covered with pitch and fastened to a stake and set on fire to light up Nero's gardens." "How awful," I exclaimed, "No," he answered, "I was glad to do something for Jesus. He died on the cross for me."

The man on the other side then spoke. "I have been in Heaven only a few hundred years. I came from an island in the South Seas. John Williams, a missionary, came and told me about Jesus and I, too, learned to love Him. My fellow countrymen killed the missionary and they caught me and bound me. I was beaten until I fainted, and they thought I was dead, but I revived. The next day they cooked me and ate me." "How terrible," I said. "No," he replied, "I was glad to die as a Christian. You see, the missionaries had told me that Jesus had been scourged and crowned with thorns for me."

Then they turned to me and said, "What did you suffer for Him? Or did you sell what you had for the money which sent men like John Williams to tell the heathen about Jesus?"

I was speechless. And while they both were looking at me with sorrowful eyes, I awoke. It was a dream. But I lay awake on my soft pillow for hours thinking of the money I had wasted on my own pleasures, of my extra clothing and costly car and many luxuries, and I realized that I did not know what the words of Jesus meant, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me."

Prayer: Our heavenly Father, we pray that our attitude, too, may be that of service for Thee. We thank You for the life of ease which You have granted unto us - very little of persecution or of difficulties in life. And we pray that out of the goodness of our circumstances we may love You fully with the whole heart, with the whole mind. And so today, Lord, we belong to You. And we pray even as we turn to study the Word of God that we may sense again Your precious presence and Your instruction, for we ask it in Jesus' precious name. Amen.